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UNCLAS ROME 003024

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DEPT FOR OES PDAS AROCK  
FOR OES/FO JBYRNES  
FOR OES/IHA ACRODDY

HHS FOR NIH/FOGARTY CENTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KSQA](#) [IT](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: PROJECT ONE BILLION - PATRONAGE FROM THE UN

Reftel: Gallagher-Milliken email 01/07/04

[1](#)1. This is an action request, see paragraph 4.

[1](#)2. Background: Project 1 Billion (P1B) - named for the more than 1 billion persons affected by mass violence embodied in the experience of war, ethnic conflict, torture and terrorism - has been under way since an initial meeting of officials from seven post-conflict Ministries of Health, scholars, scientists and international policy makers from more than 20 countries in September 2002 in Sarajevo. P1B is sponsored by the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma (Harvard University), Caritas of Rome, Istituto Superiore di Sanita (Italian National Institute of Health), Istituto Studi Superiori Assunzione, Fulbright New Century Scholar Program and the World Bank, with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Italian Ministry of Health. The Project is organizing an International Congress of Ministers of Health for Mental Health and Post-Conflict Recovery to be held in Rome on December 3-4, 2004. Approximately 50 countries will be invited to endorse a science-based mental health Action Plan and Book of Best Practices that could be implemented and disseminated worldwide. In fact, post-trauma stress disease (PTSD) is without doubt the greatest long-term effect of war. It affects economic and political recovery from conflict. As victims pass their stress on to their children, it will have multi-generational results. According to P1B data, even poor countries can help PTSD victims without using expensive psychiatrists, hospitals and medicines. Traditional healers, low budget health workers, clergy, teachers and others can be trained to counsel individuals and families and to run groups that alleviate stress. The conference has received moral and financial support from the GOI, local and regional authorities, the International Organization for Migration, and private companies.

[1](#)3. The conference brochure has a list of government institutions (e.g. the President of the Italian Republic) and international organizations (e.g. the Red Cross) supporting the concept behind the initiative (the so-called "Patronage list"). Conference organizers believe that UN support would increase the visibility and prestige of the initiative. Embassy Rome also believes that this is a good idea. Per reftel, Post knows that OES/IHA was supportive of P1B, even if could not allocate funds for the initiative. Ambassador Sembler supports the project and agreed to give opening remarks at a meeting introducing the P1B to the post-conflict countries ambassadors in Rome last April. The Science section is helping the organization committee, though acting "behind the scenes" (the Embassy - or other USG organizations - will not be in the patronage list).

[1](#)4. Action request: Department is asked to contact appropriate UN officials to seek UN agreement to officially support Project 1 Billion. Sembler

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